

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7276

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 3893

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, ELTN, ZA, CG

SUBJ: ZAMBIA-ZAIRE JOINT COMMISSION TO MEET

REF: KINSHASA 11933

1. FOLLOWING A TWO-HOUR MEETING DECEMBER 20, PRESIDENTS KAUNDA AND MOBUTU ANNOUNCED THAT A HIGH-LEVEL MEETING OF THE ZAMBIA-ZAIRE JOINT COMMISSION WILL TAKE PLACE IN LUSAKA DECEMBER 26. ACCORDING TO PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SPOKESMAN MILIMO PUNABANTU, THIS WILL BE THE FIRST TIME THAT A COMMISSION MEETING WILL INCLUDE MINISTERS FROM BOTH COUNTRIES. ATTENDING ON THE ZAMBIAN SIDE WILL BE FOREIGN MINISTER MWALE, FINANCE MINISTER MWANAKATWE, MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND FOREIGN TRADE MAPOMA, AND MEMBER OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE FOR COPPERBELT PROVINCE MR. SHADRACK SOKO. THE ZAIREAN DELEGATION WILL INCLUDE THE MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, FINANCE, AND COMMERCE, AS WELL AS THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONER FOR SHABA PROVINCE.

2. PUNABANTU TOLD NEWSMEN THAT THE COMMISSION "WILL DISCUSS IN DEPTH TRADE AND BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN ZAIRE AND
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ZAMBIA, INCLUDING SUCH PROBLEMS AS THE PEDICLE ROAD AND SMUGGLING." THE SPOKESMAN ADDED THAT THE COMMISSION MAY ALSO REVIEW THE GENERAL SITUATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. ON THE KAUNDA-MOBUTU MEETING, PUNABANTU SAID THE TWO LEADERS DISCUSSED BILATERAL RELATIONS AND THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS ON RHODESIA.

3. COMMENT: WE SUSPECT THAT MOBUTU ALSO RAISED THE QUESTION OF KATANGANS ALLEGEDLY INFILTRATING SHABA THROUGH ZAMBIA. KAUNDA MOST LIKELY WOULD GIVE ASSURANCES THAT ZAMBIA WOULD NOT PERMIT SUCH MOVEMENT, BUT SUCH ASSURANCES WOULD BE HARD TO HONOR GIVEN THE LENGTH AND DIFFICULT TERRAIN OF THE ZAIRE-ZAMBIA BORDER.

4. PROBLEMS INVOLVING THE PEDICLE ROAD WHICH JOINS ZAMBIA'S COPPERBELT AND LUAPULA PROVINCES WILL LIKELY BE HIGH ON THE AGENDA OF THE JOINT COMMISSION. IN RECENT WEEKS, THERE HAVE BEEN INCREASING COMPLAINTS ABOUT TREATMENT BY ZAIREAN OFFICIALS ALONG THE ROAD, INCLUDING CHARGES OF ILL-TREATMENT AND ROBBERY MADE BY THE MEMBER OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE FOR LUAPULA PROVINCE AND THE ZAMBIAN MINISTER OF INFORMATION, BROADCASTING, AND TOURISM. THE LATTER, MR. UNIA MWILA, A WEEK AGO, URGED ZAMBIANS TO AVOID USING THE ROAD "TO ESCAPE TERRIBLE SUFFERING." LOW

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